

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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MARKEY JOINS DEMOCRATIC COLLEAGUES AS COSPONSOR OF THE PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

WASHINGTON, DC — U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-Malden) today joined the Democratic leadership and dozens of his colleagues in introducing the "Patient Bill of Rights Act (PBRA)." Rep. Markey is an original cosponsor of the bill which includes common-sense consumer protections for patients in managed care plans. Among the important reforms in the bill is the "anti-gag rule" provision which was the subject of the "Patient Right to Know Act" sponsored by Rep. Markey and Rep. Greg Ganske (R-IA).

Rep. Markey said, "Patients, consumers and doctors, in Massachusetts and across the country, are asking Congress to give the managed care industry a wake-up call. Americans want higher standards on the quality of health care services they receive, the depth of coverage they are offered and on the accountability of their health plan for failure to meet these new high standards."

The Democratic Patients Bill of Rights will do the following:

- Assure access to medically needed care for patients enrolled in health plans, including access to emergency rooms and specialists;
- prevent inappropriate interference in the doctor/patient relationship by prohibiting gag rules (the Markey-Ganske provision) on physicians and limiting financial incentives to withhold necessary care – among other measures;
- guarantee timely internal appeals, as well as independent external appeals, when plans deny care;
- provide patients with understandable information about their health plan to help them choose their plan and know their rights;
- and hold plans legally accountable for decisions that lead to serious injury or death.

"Democrats have been trying to reform the health care system in sensible, incremental steps. We fought for the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill, which makes health insurance portable and limiting restrictions on coverage for pre-existing conditions. We fought for an expansion of coverage for millions of uninsured children, and we are now fighting to enact meaningful managed care reforms – reforms that will be good for patients and good for countless businesses who want to see their employees health protected and cared for. I am proud to be part of this fight," said Markey.

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